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The *Asafo* System in Historical Perspective[Ansu K. Datta](#) ^(a1) and [R. Porter](#) ^(a2)<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853700010689>

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Extract

There has been some controversy as to the origins of the *Asafo*, the patrilineal military bands of the coastal Akan, and especially of the Fante, in Ghana. One view holds that the *asafo* system is indigenous to Fante society, the other that its development is in some way connected with the presence of Europeans on the coast from the end of the fifteenth century onwards. After an examination of the nature of the *asafo* system and of its patrilinealism, historical evidence relating to the *asafo*, the *manceroes* (young men), and town wards in Fante society is set out in some detail. It is concluded that the *asafo* system is probably indigenous in its origins, but that its development, particularly on the coast and among the Fante especially, has been much influenced by situations resulting from contact with Europeans.

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Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Ratelband+op.+cit.+83+and+192+entries+for+24+10+1645+and+26+and+27+06+1646.>)

⁵⁹ See note 55, *Eguafo*.

⁶⁰ Ratelband, , op. cit. 161, entry for 14 04 1646.

Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Ratelband+op.+cit.+161+entry+for+14+04+1646.>)

⁶¹ See note 38, Nuyts's Diary, entry for 16 Aug. 1706.

⁶² See Ryder, A. F. C., *Materials for West African History in Portuguese archives* (London, 1965).

Google Scholar (https://scholar.google.com/scholar_lookup?title=Materials+for+West+African+History+in+Portuguese+archives&publication+year=1965&author=Ryder+A.+F.+C.)

⁶² Barbot, , op. cit. 156.

Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Barbot+op.+cit.+156.>) Claridge, W. W., *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti* (Murray, 1915; Cass, 1964), 1, 57.

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Blake, J. W., *Europeans in West Africa, 1450–1560* (Hakluyt Society, London, 1942), 1, 45.

Google Scholar (https://scholar.google.com/scholar_lookup?title=Europeans+in+West+Africa+1450%E2%80%931560&publication+year=1942&author=Blake+J.+W.)

⁶⁴ Blake, , op. cit. 46. For an account of a conflict between two parties at Elmina in 1490 which had about it something of the flavour of an *asafo* broil,
 Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Blake+op.+cit.+46.+For+an+account+of+a+conflict+between+two+parties+at+Elmina+in+1490+which+had+about+it+something+of+the+flavour+of+an+asafo+broil+>)
 see Blake, , op. cit. 86. Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Blake+op.+cit.+86.>)

⁶⁵ Valkenburg, J., *Vertoog of Deductie...*, probably 1659, in de Jonge, J. K. J., *De oorsprong van Neerlands Bezittingen op de Kust van Guinea* (The Hague, 1871), appx. 8, 51 ff. A. R. Archives of the States General, Loket Kas, Sweden, Further Memorial from W.I.C. to S.G., delivered 22 Aug. 1662; F.P.
 Google Scholar (https://scholar.google.com/scholar_lookup?title=Vertoog+of+Deductie%E2%80%A6&publication+year=1659&author=Valkenburg+J.&author=de+Jonge+J.+K.+J.)

⁶⁶ Webster, J. B. and Boahen, A. A., *The Revolutionary Years: West Africa Since 1800* (Longmans, 1967), 125.
 Google Scholar (https://scholar.google.com/scholar_lookup?title=The+Revolutionary+Years:+West+Africa+Since+1800&publication+year=1967&author=Webster+J.+B.&author=Boahen+A.+A.)

⁶⁷ Rodney, W., 'Gold and Slaves on the Gold Coast', in *Trans. Hist. Soc. of Ghana*, **10** (1969), 14–15.
 Google Scholar (https://scholar.google.com/scholar_lookup?title=Gold+and+Slaves+on+the+Gold+Coast&publication+year=1969&author=Rodney+W.&journal=Trans.+Hist.+Soc.+of+Ghana&volume=10&pages=14-15)
 Daaku, , op. cit. 149–51. The individuals referred to are Edward Barter (d. 1702), John Cabes (died c.1720), John Kurentsi (d. 1764) and William Ansah, son of Kurentsi.
 Google Scholar ([https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Daaku+op.+cit.+149%E2%80%9351.+The+individuals+referred+to+are+Edward+Barter+\(d.+1702\)+John+Cabes+\(died+c.1720\)+John+Kurentsi+\(d.+1764\)+and+William+Ansah+son+of+Kurentsi.](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Daaku+op.+cit.+149%E2%80%9351.+The+individuals+referred+to+are+Edward+Barter+(d.+1702)+John+Cabes+(died+c.1720)+John+Kurentsi+(d.+1764)+and+William+Ansah+son+of+Kurentsi.))

68 The Alata company of Mouri may have had its ultimate origin in the cargo of slaves from the Bight that was brought to Mouri, probably to help with the rebuilding of the fort, in 1624. A. R. Admiralty College Archives 11, 1370, Res. of 18 Oct. 1624; F.P.